

Message Text

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PAGE 01 JIDDA 05592 250759Z

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ACTION PA-04

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FM AMEMBASSY JIDDA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8770

INFO AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

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E.O. 11652: NA

TAGS: CASC, SA

SUBJECT: VISIT OF MRS. MARY POMEROY AND THE LADIES OF THE
SOCIETY FOR FRIENDSHIP AMONG WOMEN

REF: (A) CAIRO 7297, (B) CAIRO 7273, (C) CAIRO 7224,
(D) JIDDA 5374, (E) STATE 198080

SUMMARY: EMBASSY JIDDA REGRETS IT IS UNABLE PROVIDE THE
SERVICES REQUESTED BY MRS. POMEROY IN PARA 2 REF C. SHE
SHOULD ATTEMPT AGAIN TO PLAN A VISIT TO SAUDI ARABIA UPON
RETURNING TO THE UNITED STATES. SOME POSSIBLE APPROACHES
ARE SUGGESTED BY EMBASSY. END SUMMARY.

1. BY REF C EMBASSY CAIRO HAS FORWARDED TO THE EMBASSY A
REQUEST FROM MRS. MARY POMEROY THAT THE EMBASSY (A) MAKE
ARRANGEMENTS WITH THE SAG FOR A DELEGATION OF SEVENTEEN
LADIES OF THE SOCIETY FOR FRIENDSHIP AMONG WOMEN TO VISIT
JIDDA NOVEMBER 14-16 AND RIYADH NOV 16-18, (B) SEE THAT ALL
OF THE LADIES HAVE SAUDIS VISAS BEFORE DEPARTING THE U.S.,
(C) ARRANGE A PROGRAM FOR THE GROUP WITH "DISTINGUISHED
SAUDI LADIES PROMINENT IN PUBLIC LIFE, INCLUDING THE QUEEN,"
(D) EXTEND INVITATIONS TO APPROPRIATE LADIES FOR A DINNER
PARTY TO BE GIVEN BY THE GROUP.

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PAGE 02 JIDDA 05592 250759Z

2. THE EMBASSY REGRETS THAT ITS POSSIBLE ACTION ON THESE

REQUESTS IS MORE CONTRAINED THAN IT WOULD BE IN MOST OTHER ARAB COUNTRIES. THE EMBASSY, FOR INSTANCE, MAY NOT ITSELF SPONSOR A NON-OFFICIAL VISITOR OR GROUP FOR A VISA TO SAUDI ARABIA. THERE ARE MANY DISTINGUISHED SAUDI LADIES, BUT NONE PROMINENT IN PUBLIC LIFE. THE WIFE OF KING FAYSAL ESCHEWS PUBLICITY AND IS VERY SELDOM INVOLVED IN PUBLIC AFFAIRS AND NEVER IN THE PUBLIC VIEW. (THE SMALL DINNER SHE GAVE FOR MRS. NIXON WAS A RARE EXCEPTION WITH NO ATTENDANT PUBLICITY.)

3. THERE ARE A NUMBER OF SAUDI LADIES WHO MIGHT AT SOME POINT BE WILLING TO SPONSOR A VISIT BY MRS. POMEROY. HOWEVER, THEY WOULD DO THIS AS PRIVATE INDIVIDUALS. IT WOULD NOT BE APPROPRIATE FOR THE EMBASSY TO APPROACH AN INDIVIDUAL AND REQUEST THAT SHE SPONSOR A PRIVATE AMERICAN CITIZEN. WE SUGGEST, THEREFORE, THAT MRS. POMEROY NOT COUNT FOR THE TIME BEING ON THE INCLUSION OF SAUDI ARABIA IN THE GROUP'S ITINERARY.

4. WE ALSO SUGGEST THAT MRS. POMEROY BE INFORMED THAT BECAUSE OF THE INTENSE PRIVATISM IN SAUDI ARABIA WITH REGARD TO ANYTHING HAVING TO DO WITH WOMEN AND WOMEN'S AFFAIRS, THAT SHE SHOULD HERSELF SEEK TO GAIN ACCEPTANCE OF HER VISIT FROM SAUDIS WILLING TO SUPPORT IT. TO ACCOMPLISH THIS WE SUGGEST THAT (A) MRS. POMEROY SEND US LITERATURE IN A NUMBER OF COPIES EXPLAINING THE PURPOSE AND ACTIVITIES OF THE SOCIETY FOR FRIENDSHIP AMONG WOMEN, INCLUDING MATERIAL ON THE TRIP PROPOSED FOR THIS FALL, (B) THE EMBASSY DISTRIBUTE THIS MATERIAL TO SAUDI LADIES WHO WOULD BE INTERESTED IN THE GROUP'S ACTIVITIES. (WE HAVE IN MIND PARTICULARLY THOSE ASSOCIATED WITH THE WOMEN'S BRANCH OF KING ABDAL-AZIZ UNIVERSITY IN JIDDA.), (C) WE SEND TO MRS. POMEROY THE NAMES OF PERSONS THAT EXPRESS INTEREST IN HER GROUP AND ENCOURAGE THEM TO WRITE HER DIRECTLY, (D) MRS. POMEROY CONTINUE HER CONTACTS WITH THE SAUDI EMBASSY IN WASHINGTON, (E) SOMEONE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE WHO HAS LIVED IN SAUDI ARABIA (PREFERABLY A WOMAN) EXPLAIN TO MRS. POMEROY CURRENT SOCIAL VALUES AND CUSTOMS IN SAUDI ARABIA AS THEY RELATE TO WOMEN.

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PAGE 03 JIDDA 05592 250759Z

5. IT MIGHT ALSO BE EXPLAINED TO MRS. POMEROY THAT EMBASSY OFFICERS AND OTHER US OFFICIALS HAVE QUITE FREQUENTLY DISCUSSED WITH PRIVATE AND OFFICIAL SAUDIS THE NEED FOR PROGRESS REGARDING THE ROLE AND STATUS OF WOMEN IN SAUDI ARABIA. THIS WAS DONE MOST RECENTLY IN CONNECTION WITH THE PROGRAM OF INTENSIFIED US-SAUDI COOPERATION FOR DEVELOPMENT. WHILE OUR COMMENTS HAVE GENERALLY BEEN RECEIVED WITH POLITE RESERVE, WE HAVE BEEN LEFT IN NO DOUBT THAT SAUDIS

FOUND OUR INTRUSIONS INTO THIS AREA UNWELCOME.

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